

## Extended Family Services

As set out in the May, 2003, *Legal Aid Fax*, the reduced volume of cases last year has made it possible for LSS to fund a number of one-time initiatives in 2003/2004. One of these is the extended family services initiative, which will approve extra services to clients at greatest risk.

LSS has funds to provide up to 50 additional hours of legal time to approximately 500 clients. Clients with existing approved services referrals are not eligible for extended services referrals.

Counsel are invited to submit an Opinion Letter (on the LSS website at [http://lss.bc.ca/for\\_lawyers/pdf\\_lawyer-tariff/espolf.pdf](http://lss.bc.ca/for_lawyers/pdf_lawyer-tariff/espolf.pdf)) on behalf of any client who they believe meets the following criteria:

1. The client has a current emergency services referral with a date of assignment on or after May 1, 2002; and
  - a) is involved in a high-conflict case involving sexual, mental, or physical abuse of the client or his or her children; or
  - b) has significant involvement with the Ministry of Children and Family Development; or
  - c) is involved in a case where the opposing party is privately represented, has been unreasonably litigious, and is using the justice system to continue a pattern of abuse; or
  - d) the case involves a significant risk of alienation of the client's children and permanent destruction of the established relationship between the client and the children (e.g., ongoing denial of access or mobility cases, to prevent the other party from moving with the children).
2. The trial will be *concluded* before March 31, 2004.

Opinion Letters must be submitted before 5:00 p.m. on July 25, 2003, to the Manager of Tariff Services, by mail to 1500 – 1140 W. Pender Street, Vancouver, BC V6E 4G1 or by facsimile to (604) 601-6297. Opinion Letters received *after* this date cannot be considered. You will receive a response from LSS by August 31, 2003, indicating whether or not your request is approved.

Counsel *must* include all relevant pleadings *and* the client's sworn financial statement with the Opinion Letter. Opinion Letters that provide insufficient information will not be considered. Please note: LSS will not be able to follow up on your submissions by requesting missing documents.

LSS will prioritize the Opinion Letters to ensure that the limited number of extended services referrals is available to those most in need. If LSS is in a position to issue more extended service referrals after reviewing all Opinion Letters received, further submissions will be solicited from the bar.

Cases approved for this project will receive one of three standard sets of services: Provincial Court, Supreme Court, or Supreme Court with discoveries.

All services must be completed and billings submitted by March 31, 2004. Any billings submitted after that date will not be honoured and will be returned to counsel.

Catherine McNeil  
*Director of Finance & Corporate Services*

Harold Clark  
*Director of Human Resources & Field Operations*